TAXI VERDICT IN HALIFAX

‘THIS IS YOUR REASON? I WAS SHOCKED’

Passenger speaks out after judge acquitted cab driver, saying, ‘Clearly, a drunk can consent’

metroNEWS

Ottawa metro

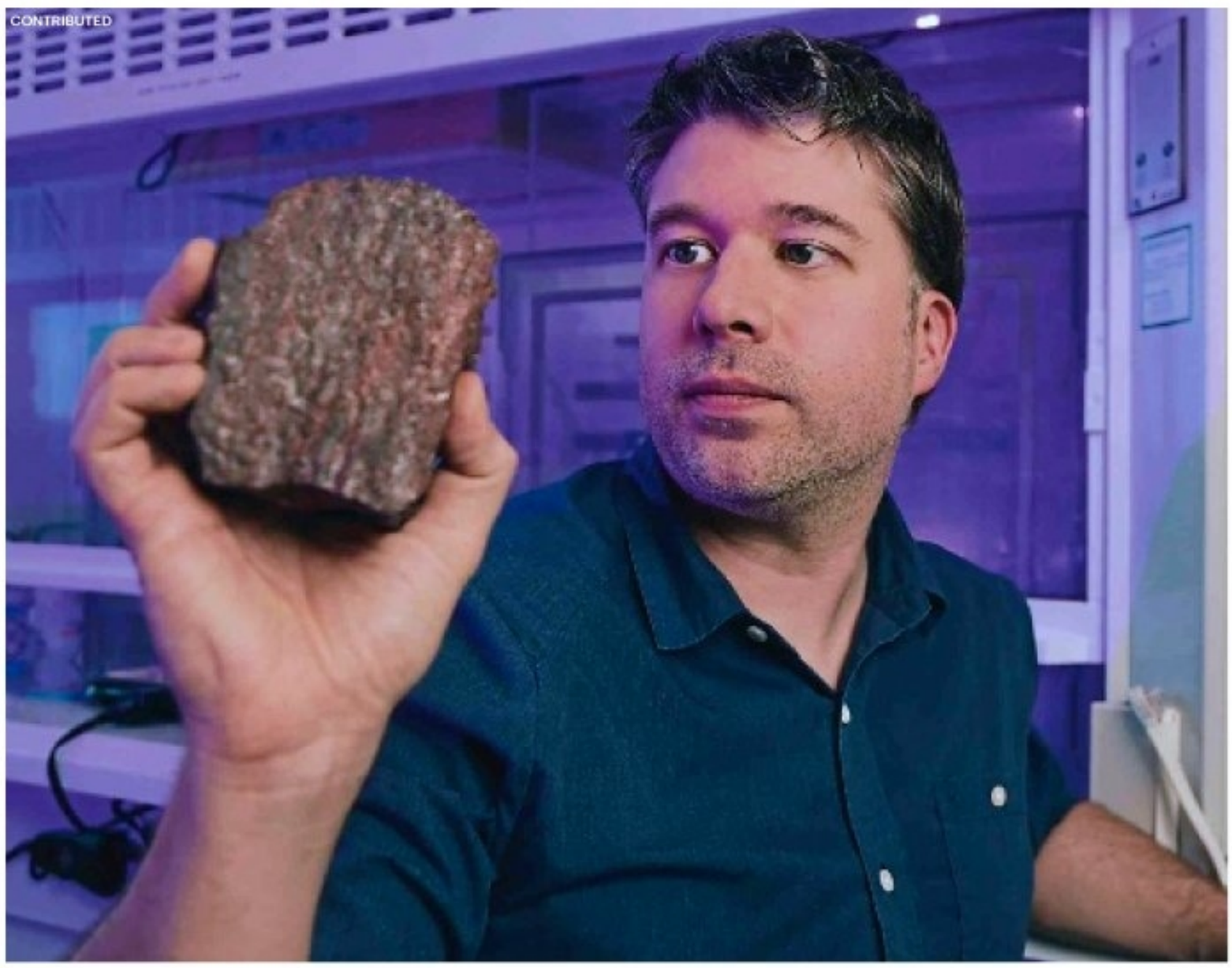
Your essential daily news | MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2017

High -1°C/Low -3°C Snow, brief sleet

VICKY MOCHAMA

Tempted to laugh off casual racism, the easier option is to just ‘get out’

metroVIEWS



CONTRIBUTED

‘Oldest traces of life’

University of Ottawa geologist’s world rocked by discovery of what he believes are oldest fossils ever found

metroNEWS

Rebate for empty office space may get the boot

TAX REBATES

Program cost more than $80M over six years

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

The city is looking at ending a tax-rebate program that has doubled in cost over the last six years, returning more than $80 million to owners of properties that aren’t fully occupied.

The vacancy-rebate program gives proportionate tax rebates to owners of commercial and industrial properties that fill all the space in their buildings.

A landlord that fails to rent all the space in a downtown building, for example, can apply for a property-tax rebate of up to 30 per cent.

Over the last six years, the city has given out 6,000 such rebates. The city has sent about $59 million to landlords over that time, with another $23 million in education property taxes also rebated. The cost of administering the program adds another approximately $3 million.

In 2009, the program cost $9.2 million; in 2015 it cost $18.3 million.

Wendy Stephanson, the city’s deputy treasurer, said they’re doing consultations on the program this month, looking at everything from scaling back the program to simply ending it.

The provincial government said last year that municipalities would have more flexibility in the rebate program.

Stephanson said right now landowners have to provide proof their space has been vacant for at least 90 days and that they have attempted to lease it.

She said the city can’t get into whether the landlord is seeking a reasonable lease price or whether they have actually invested in improving the space.

“The quality doesn’t come into place at all. It’s really just trying to prove an indication to the city that you’re trying to get the space leased.”

She said they believe landlords want their space rented, but they’re worried right now the rebate program sends the wrong message.

“This program doesn’t necessarily incentivize behavior,” she said.

Coun. Mathieu Fleury said he believes it’s time to end the rebate.

“I don’t understand why we would give that type of incentive for property owners, especially on ground floor commercial on main streets,” he said.

As far-right rhetoric heats up, activist group Ottawa Against Fascism emerges metroNEWS

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Officials say FBI Director James Comey disputes Trump's claims that Obama wiretapped telephones. **World**

Hot competition at Crashed Ice

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Red Bull Crashed Ice attracted 15,000 people downtown Saturday night, with many hailing the first major event of Ottawa 2017 a major success.

"We were certainly happy with the outcome," said Coun. Mathieu Fleury.

"We imagined the crowds, but couldn't have pictured such a huge turnout."

He said he thought the cold, with temperatures dipping below -20 C might have kept some people away, but the downtown was packed.

"Everyone said it was cold, but everyone also really enjoyed the event," Fleury said.

The city bid to bring the event to Ottawa for the first time, using the Rideau Canal locks as a launching-off point, with a course that went from the Chateau Laurier down to the bottom of the canal.

Fleury said there is a lot to like about the event and it's worth exploring if the city can bring it back in a few years.

"It's an event that fills the hotel rooms and certainly brings out the crowds. We saw a wide-range from baby boomers to young adults," he said.

"It's certainly accessible to everyone it hits all the checkmarks we were looking for."

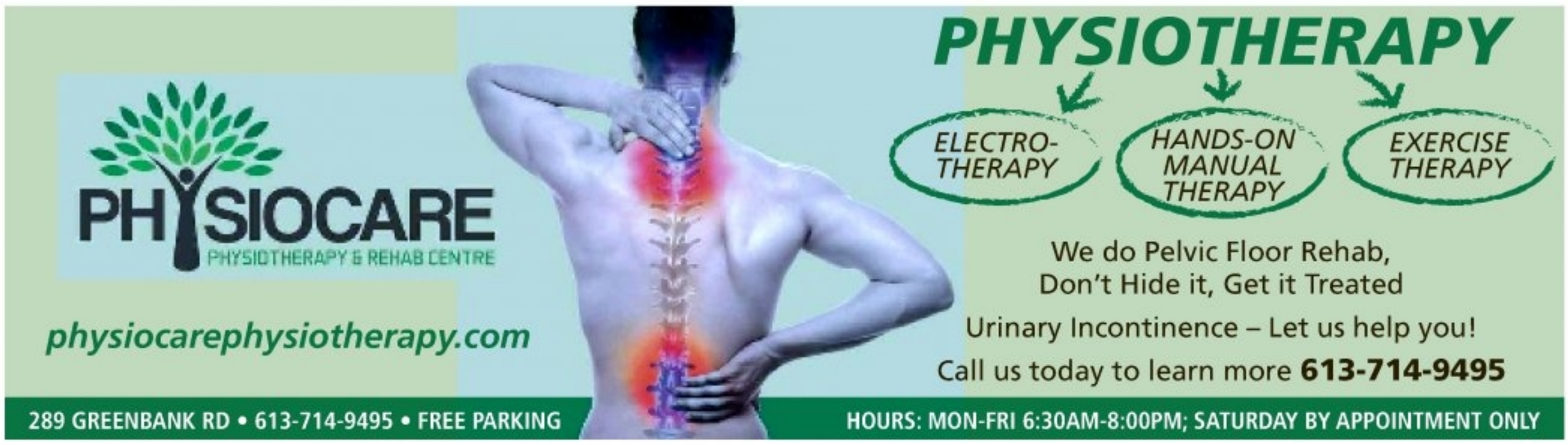
1 Parliament Hill is seen in the background as competitors go down the Red Bull Crashed Ice track on Saturday. JUSTIN TANG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

2 Four competitors come down the first hill. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

3 A competitor takes a spill. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

4 The city is already discussing bringing back the event to Ottawa in three years time. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO

5 A competitor gets some air as comes down the first ramp. HALEY RITCHIE/METRO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The best spots for a post-ski brewski

THE BOTTLENECK

Jordan Duff

Getting out into the cold and being active is one of the perks of living in our particular geography. Ottawa has access to some great hills for skiing, snowboarding and snowblading. After getting frostbite on the slopes, warming up with a post-ski beer is a must. Here are some hills and breweries that will help you meet those goals.

Nearby Calabogie Brewing is but a long snowball's throw — six kilometres or so — from Calabogie Peaks. The brewery offers a saison, a gose, an ESB and a stout, Black Donald. Thick and darkly robust, Black Donald is named after the nearby lake and warms beautifully. Oh, and there's also Double Bogie, an IPA with a mountainesque peak IBU (International Bitterness Units) of 90.

Pakenham's Cartwright Springs Brewery is built in a beautiful rural setting. The location is important since the brewery exclusively uses its own onsite springwater. Nearby, Mount Pakenham ski resort offers 10 runs and lifts to pair with the brewery's seven available beers.

Mont-Tremblant is a big hill and the village even boasts its own brewpub: La Diable. But there is a brewery in town that's worth a visit. Microbrasserie Saint-Arnould, named for the abbot that blessed a barrel of beer for the health of others, has been making beer for 20 years. Though they have a deep lineup of brews, a big hill like Tremblant is best celebrated with a big beer, like their L'Eveque Belgian Dubbel.

Camp Fortune skiing is convenient and approachable for many in the city centre, with its Gatineau Park location. Right at the park's entrance, at the Old Chelsea Pub, one can satisfy a post-ski craving with beers from Gainsbourg Bistro-Brasserie. Their refreshing Blanche de Chelsea replenishes after tackling all those green-circle runs.

> **No matter which hill or brewery you visit, indulging après-ski is the safer option than doing so avant-ski.**

Finally, for the advanced drinker and the amateur skier, Beacon Hill Ski Hill boasts an elevation of only 50 metres but a brewery count of three, all within mutual walking distance: Dominion City Brewing Company and Broken Stick Brewing are over on in the Canotek business park, while Big Rig's brew pub is up near Gloucester Centre.

Remember: No matter which hill or brewery you visit, indulging après-ski is the safer option than doing so avant-ski.

Oldest fossil rocks geologist's world

RESEARCH

International team discovers earliest known evidence of life

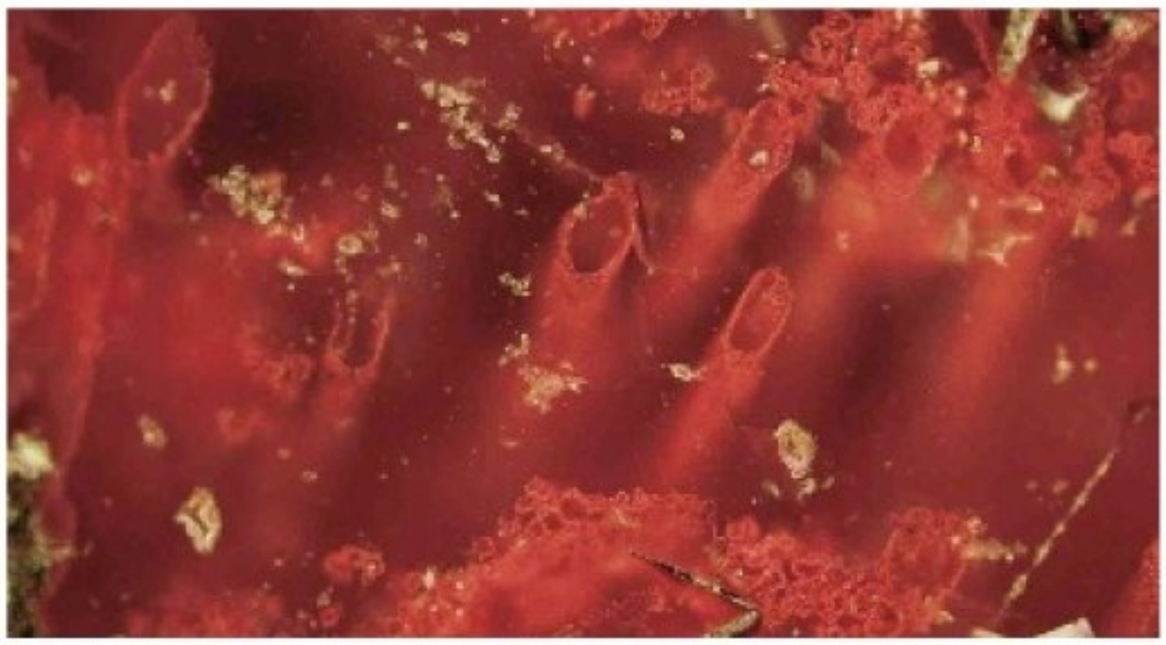
Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

A local researcher has made some potentially world-changing additions to his rock collection.

University of Ottawa geologist Jonathan O'Neil was part of the international team that discovered what they say is the oldest fossil record ever identified and therefore the earliest known evidence of life on the planet. The find was written up in Nature last week.

Some scientists, not all, believe Earth was formed 4.6 billion years ago. O'Neil's team have dated the fossils, which they found in northern Quebec, to between 4.3 billion and 3.7 billion years ago. If those numbers don't impress you, consider that dinosaurs appeared a mere 230 million years ago and that humans began walking on two legs 6 million years ago.

"Holding a rock in your hand that contains the oldest traces of life, it's actually pretty surreal," O'Neil said. "It puts everything in perspective and shows you that us humans are just the last two seconds of Earth's history."



The recently-discovered NSB hydrothermal vent specimens from the Nuvvuagittuq Greenstone in northern Quebec are direct evidence of early life on Earth, researchers reported on March 1 in the journal Nature. GETTY IMAGES/HANDOUT

The specimens were extracted from the Nuvvuagittuq Greenstone, the oldest oceanic crust formed on Earth. Fossilized within the layers of the rock are signs of micro-organisms: tiny filaments and tubes that, according to the Nature paper, were formed by bacteria that lived on iron.

The discovery supports a theory, which not all scientists in the field subscribe to, that life emerged from hot seafloor vents soon after Earth was formed. The paper's results will have to withstand major scrutiny and attempts at replication before they can be considered confirmed.

O'Neil believes the discovery will stand up to review and that the breakthrough will aid others searching for similar evidence all over the plane — and even the solar system.

"We'll continue on this, try to add more pieces to the puzzle and have a more complex picture of what Earth was like back then," he said. "More and more we know what we're looking for.

"It's not for tomorrow that we'll go in Mars to get samples back, but it will be very useful to know how life started on Earth before going on our neighbour planet to look for traces of potential life."

BY THE NUMBERS

4.6B

Most scientists believe Earth was formed about 4.6 billion years ago.

4.3B

Jonathan O'Neil and a team of international geologists have dated fossils found in Quebec to be between 3.7 billion and 4.3 billion years old.

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LE CARREFOUR

TECHNOLOGY

Studio develops virtual tour of Parliament for Canada 150

Alana Thoman
For Metro | Ottawa

The Carleton Immersive Media Studio (CIMS) has developed a virtual tour of the Senate Foyer, Antechamber and Chamber to showcase Parliament as part of Canada's 150th anniversary.

Katie Graham the team lead on the project said the CIMS has done other work with the Parliament of Canada documenting the buildings and creating models, but none of these have been a way to showcase the building to the public.

"The Parliament buildings will be closed to the public soon for the constructions so we were thinking with Senate communications that there should be a way to make parts of the building accessible to the public in general," said Graham.

Graham said the tour will begin by picking the language you prefer, and then there are many different stations involving 360 panoramas which include hot spots that give additional information on certain objects like the war paintings in the Senate Chambers, the sculptures in the Senate Antechamber or the stone carvings in the foyer.

"Some of these will have additional not just photos but as well as animated gifs that are created through photogrammetry which is when you take many many photos in a kind of ... grid formation of an object and then you stitch it together to create a 3D model," she said.

Other technologies used included a regular camera with a fish eye lens and a special tripod called the nodal ninja for the panoramas.

"We take six photos in a circle and then one photo shooting up and all of that gets stitched together to create a panoramic image," said Graham.

This tour was launched at an event near Parliament Hill On Mar. 1. for politicians and the press, which Graham said people reacted positively to.

"Everyone seemed quite entertained by it and quite enjoyed it," said Graham.

The tour can be accessed through the Senate of Canada website.

New voices in far left

PROTEST

As far right flexes, rally Saturday shows leftist activism

Dylan C. Robertson
For Metro | Ottawa

Amid heated rhetoric around immigration, Ottawa activists are looking back three decades to old tactics of crushing speech they feel leads to violence, including by responding with force.

Ottawa Against Fascism held its first event Saturday, when 30 people gathered near the human-rights monument.

"This open fascism and open oppression can't be debated and must be smashed," a young man named Brendan said into a megaphone, surrounded by anti-fascist banners.

"Victory to the oppressed people, down with fascism and down with Islamophobia," he said, prompting cheers from the group, who braved a -29 C windchill. Some wore all black and hid their faces, while others flew red flags with the Soviet Union's hammer-and-sickle insignia.

The new group is sponsored by the Revolutionary Communist Party. In a throwback to Ottawa demonstrators in the 1990s, Saturday's anti-fascists say they'll shout down racists around the capital, and aren't afraid to respond with violence if minorities get attacked.

No interest in dialogue

Saturday's event was a counter-demonstration to a small gathering by the Canadian Coalition of Concerned Citizens, which advocates for less immigration and believes federal anti-Islamophobia motion M-103 will lay the groundwork for Sharia law in Canada.

Ottawa Against Fascism tore down a handful of that group's posters, and tried setting them ablaze with a cigarette lighter in the cold wind.

After 45 minutes outside, the protesters gathered inside Ottawa City Hall for a discussion.

"The point wasn't to have a conversation with them," Brendan told Metro. "If you give them a platform, they're only going to spread their hatred."

Brendan wouldn't give his last name, while others refused to speak to Metro. They all claimed that far-right groups "doxx" activists, by stalking them online, harassing them in person and sending threats to family members.

"These groups will get violent and they'll attack refugees, they'll attack minorities," Brendan said. "Their ideology is one of violence against the most oppressed groups of our society."

Brendan noted the swastikas and hateful messages spray-painted across Ottawa places of worship last November. "This is a very real thing that happens in Ottawa, and these ideas do exist."

Questioning 'free speech'

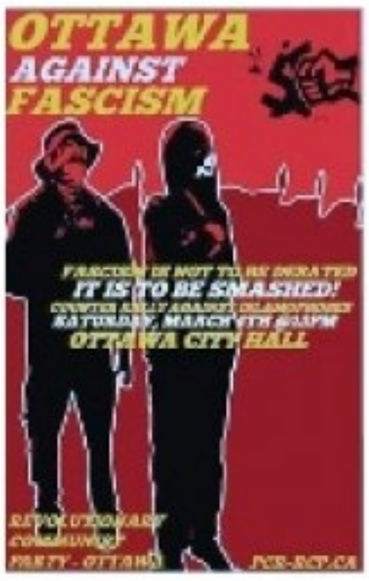
Many at the rally said they see anti-immigrant rhetoric from U.S. President Donald Trump echoing in Canada.

"Trump, he wears his s–t on his sleeve. Everybody else buries it in pleasantries," said Sky Leaf WanderingTurtle. "It's always been here — it's just never been so much in the forefront."

As a trans queer who converted to Islam, WanderingTurtle said bigots are gaining a foothold while Canada still hasn't reconciled with its Indigenous population.

"There's this idea that free speech is for everybody. But if free speech is going to be at the expense of demonizing somebody, or dehumanizing somebody, that's where it stops."

> This open fascism and open oppression can't be debated and must be smashed. 'Brendan'



ABOVE: Ottawa Against Fascism rally. DYLAN C. ROBERTSON/FOR METRO OTTAWA; LEFT: The poster for the rally produced by the Revolutionary Communist Party — Ottawa FACEBOOK

Current discourse

Such skepticism toward the concept of free speech is in keeping with recent actions undertaken by left-leaning social-justice groups in both Canada and the U.S. In 2013, seventh-year Carleton University undergrad Arun Smith gained national attention for tearing down a free speech wall, because it could allow for homophobic comments and was thus an "act of violence."

Last week, local groups started asking the National Gallery of Canada to cancel a Thursday talk by Jordan Peterson, the University of Toronto professor who refuses to use genderless pronouns.

At Saturday's protest, Meagan Wiper said she's worried people are taking advantage of free speech at the expense of her Muslim friends.

"When you know people who are affected by this, you can't really stand by," said Wiper/

She spent her childhood on military bases in Germany and she saw two concentration camps in the 1990s, and they make her worry about President Trump.

European roots

Anti-fascism movements started in continental Europe, as nationalist movements rose in the wake of the First World War. Those nationalist and fascist movements eventually swept Germany, Spain and Italy, leading to the Second World War.

Today, the strongest anti-fascist movement exists in Germany, especially among Berlin's far-left groups. The so-called "Antifa" ideology states that hateful ideas should not be given democratic space, because they are too likely to incite the majority into violence. Antifa activists justify preemptive violence and attacks on riot police, by pointing to the legacy of Nazism and East German totalitarianism.

History repeats?

To Brendan, the speaker at Saturday's Ottawa Against Fascism rally, the fact that Ottawa's streets have been witness to far-right demonstrations shows the need for his group today. "Anti-racist action groups in Ottawa were able to drive them out. (But) they still hang out in their forums online."

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Political clash flashback

Ottawa saw its share of intense right-left street clashes in the early 1990s. On May 22, 1993, Toronto-based white supremacist group Heritage Front held a rock concert at a Nepean Street hall. According to media reports, 50 people came to hear RaHoWa, a band whose name abbreviates "Racial Holy War." Roughly 10 times as many counter-protesters from Anti-Racism Action, a local chapter of a North America-wide activist group with roots in the punk rock scene, demonstrated outside.

Afterwards, about 40 white-supremacists marched onto the steps of Parliament Hill and shouted "white power" as RCMP kept almost as many counter-protesters at the Centennial Flame.

"Shortly after that, the white supremacists turned on the protesters and chased them from the Hill to Wellington and Metcalfe streets. The two groups took up positions on opposite corners, throwing bottles and rocks across the street at each other over passing traffic. Police tried to form a buffer between them," reads an Ottawa Citizen article.

Throughout the early '90s, university groups debated whether it was best to ignore these groups, or give them publicity by challenging their ideas. Meanwhile, self-identified anti-racists sabotaged Heritage Front's flyer campaigns, marches and support hotline. The Heritage Front ceased all public outreach by the mid-'90's.

DYLAN C. ROBERTSON/FOR METRO

> The white supremacists turned on the protesters.
> Ottawa Citizen, May 1993

LABOUR DISPUTE

Carleton on edge of strike

Ryan Tumilty
Metro | Ottawa

Carleton students could face picket lines and delays Monday as contract faculty and teaching assistants are poised to strike.

CUPE local 4600 and the university's administration have been in talks with the union for months, including a session over the weekend.

CUPE member Janne Cleveland said the school's current deal does not even guarantee members a wage that would keep up with inflation.

"We would be losing money to take what they have on the table now," she said.

She said contractors would also like longer-term deals that would prevent them from worrying about losing their contracts.

She said union members are committed to a better deal and prepared to walk a picket line to get it if the university doesn't offer more. She said members gave the union a clear endorsement to push for a better contract even if that includes a strike.

"We have over 600 people signed up to hit the picket line tomorrow."

The union is promising picket lines to slow traffic at both the Bronson Avenue and Colonel By Drive entrances. OC Transpo drivers are unlikely to cross the lines.

Cleveland said the union wants better working conditions, but students should be concerned as well.

"At the end of the day, the working conditions for contract faculty and teaching assistants are the learning conditions for students."

The university did not respond to a request for comment before press time.

Helping LRT to be stylish is a delicate art

Objection to 1 per cent toward rail creativity

Arts funding is a perpetual soft target in pipes-and-potholes municipal politics, perhaps especially at this time of year, with interim tax bills sitting ugly on kitchen tables across the city.

Art is subjective, seen by some as a luxury, a nice-to-have if there's a couple of bucks left in the kitty after we've covered all the serious stuff.

So when Coun. Riley Brockington last week questioned the $10 million set aside for public art on the second phase of LRT, he was striking up a familiar tune.

The money's budgeted in accordance with the city's public art policy, which requires that one per cent of the hard costs of these projects go to something pretty, weird, whimsical or startling, to liven up whatever hunk of concrete and steel.

The city plans to blow a billion on its share of Phase 2, so a penny on all those dollars comes out to $10 million. Coun. Brockington has an obvious point: $10 million is a stinking pile of money. Put the Phase 1 and Phase 2 art budgets together and that's $20 mil, about equal the bus service cut (sorry, 'rationalization') we absorbed in 2011, right around the time a not-insignificant number of people stopped taking the bus.

Give the art budget a haircut, Brockington suggests, and you could put the money into better transit service or any number of other priorities. Of course, the LRT art's a one-time expenditure, so you'd have to find something else to cut next year to keep up that improved service.

Coun. Keith Egli, chair of the city's transportation committee, does not share his colleague's sticker shock. Spread $10 million over 23 stations and many kilometres of track, he argues, it's not much.

"I'm going to be honest," he said. "I found the comments a little bit odd in light of the fact that Coun. Brockington is the vice-chair of community and protective services, which is the committee responsible for arts and culture in the city."

There are always other things you could spend any dollar on, and the public art policy is there to make sure style, vision and imagination aren't always bumped to the back of the line.

You would think a policy of 1 per cent inspiration, 99 per cent philistinism would be enough to satisfy all but the most committed fiscal conservatives.

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Canada

A rendering of new fare gates that will be installed at O-Train stops in March 2017. CONTRIBUTED

PUBLIC TRANSIT

New gates will deter O-Train freeloaders

Dylan C. Robertson
For Metro | Ottawa

This summer, fare cheats on the O-Train will have a hard time evading payment. The city is installing automated fare gates along the existing LRT, which will also be at Confederation Line stations when they open in 2018.

The scanners can read Presto cards, Gatineau's Multi card and U-Passes for students at Algonquin College, the University of Ottawa and Saint Paul University. Carleton University will have chip cards as of May. Everyone else can get in by scanning the barcode on their ticket. The gates will be placed in new enclosures opening this month, sadly just as the winter chill fades away. But they won't be active until the summer.

The gates are part of a fare strategy that the transit commission approved in December 2013, and specified last June. The cost for the gates and enclosures at the four existing O-Train stations, and gates at the 13 upcoming Confederation Line stations, is $25 million from the 2015 budget. Pat Scrimgeour, OC Transpo's planning director, says he expects savings from fewer people cheating their fares, but wouldn't say if that means fewer fare-enforcement officials.

"The new fare control system will minimize fare evasion and help to uphold the integrity of our fare system," Scrimgeour wrote in an email. "Ottawa's fare control strategy will provide modern state of the art fully-accessible fare gates."

$25M

Cost of the new fare gates across O-Train and Confederation line stations.

Seniors will continue to have free Wednesday transit, though they'll need to be registered as seniors on their Presto card to access the system, which won't charge them for entering on Wednesdays. Children under 6 years old can still enter for free, but only with a free barcode ticket issued by the machine.

"Fare gates can be controlled remotely, allowing stations to be closed for crowd control, or allowing all gates to be used as exits during an emergency," reads the 2013 report.

Passenger sends thanks for support

HALIFAX TAXI VERDICT

Woman at centre of cab driver case speaks of shock

Haley Ryan
Metro | Halifax

When she can't sleep at night, the passenger at the centre of the Halifax taxi sexual assault acquittal said she opens her phone to read comments from hundreds of strangers, their support like a "blanket" of protection.

Since Judge Gregory Lenehan declared Bassam Al-Rawi not guilty last week, his words like "clearly, a drunk can consent," and the case evidence have sparked a national outcry, official complaints to the Chief Justice, and future protests.

"The kind of terms that (Lenehan) used and the statements that he made, are making people question that credibility. Kind of like how they were supposed to be questioning my credibility," said the woman in an interview, whose identity is protected by a publication ban.

She spoke to Metro on the weekend.

"We need to believe beyond a reasonable doubt you were making a fair decision here, and I don't think that people felt that way."

The passenger, a woman in her 20s, said she's seen many assume the case began with her complaint.

In fact, she said police pressed charges after an officer found her drunk, unconscious and partially naked in the cab.

The passenger in the Halifax taxi sexual assault case spoke with Metro on Sunday. Her identity is protected by a publication ban. HALEY RYAN/METRO

It was the Crown that chose to prosecute Al-Rawi. Her only involvement was being called to testify, where she said she could remember nothing about the incident. A forensic analyst determined the woman's blood-alcohol level was as high as 241 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood - about three times the legal limit.

Until the verdict she only hoped the judge would listen to testimony, examine the evidence, and come up with a "fair decision," she said, understanding few sexual assault cases end in conviction.

If this was a man, do you think that (Lenehan) would be making those comments at him? I don't believe so.
The passenger in taxi case

But last Thursday, the woman walked into work and first read about the evidence in a Metro issue, as well as Lenehan's comments that the Crown had failed to prove she did not consent to sexual activity.

"That was definitely when the flames came up and I thought 'What? This is your reason?' I was shocked," she said, shaking her head.

Lenehan's phrase that "clearly, a drunk can consent" really hit her, the woman said, since the situation may be "clear" to Lenehan "but to the rest of the world you can't really speak to that."

After reading it, she said she felt "completely stripped naked," and as if everyone was looking at her. It's been an especially odd, "out-of-body" feeling to have friends and coworkers who don't know she was the passenger bring it up, she said. But online comments supporting her, and calling for a review into Lenehan's judgment, have been very comforting when she's unable to sleep at night, she said.

"It makes me feel better. It's like the city, especially women in the city but a lot of men too, have just been kind of forming this blanket around me like 'We're not going to stand by this,'" she said.

"If people weren't … making their voices heard I think that verdict and all of that would have just been so much worse because it would've just felt like 'Wow, the system's broken and nobody's here to fix it.'"

She's glad an official complaint has been made to the Chief Justice about Lenehan's judgment, she said, and no matter what happens "as far as sexual assault cases go, specifically, he should have no part in those anymore."

The woman said it's up to the Crown to appeal the case, but if she's again called to testify she will not only because it's her legal duty, but because of "all these people rallying around. For my part I have to kind of be the voice behind that as well."

COURT

Women gather to prepare complaints about judge's ruling

Martha Cody, Sarah Bezanson and Ingrid Cottonden write down notes as Elise MacIntyre reads out a message from a lawyer on the topic of Judge Gregory Lenehan. CODY MCEACHERN/METRO HALIFAX

Cody McEachern
For Metro | Halifax

Four women met around a table at the Halifax Central Library on Sunday afternoon.

They were there to discuss Judge Gregory Lenehan and his decision to acquit taxi driver Bassam Al-Rawi of sexual assault of a female passenger.

"How much more evidence do you need to prove sexual assault," Elise MacIntyre said to the other women. "He didn't care about her, and he shouldn't be the one to make a decision on the well-being of a woman again."

They all nodded and scribbled down notes on pads of paper in front of them.

MacIntyre organized the meeting after she took to Facebook to find out how to file a complaint against the judge, whose verdict has drawn national attention over comments that the Crown was not able to prove the complainant's "lack of consent" despite her high intoxication level, and the remark that "clearly, a drunk can consent."

"Everyone was talking about sending a letter," said MacIntyre. "But I kept getting different bits of information from people I spoke to on Facebook, it seemed the process kept changing. So I felt it would be good if a bunch of us could come together to brainstorm and figure out how to get our voices heard."

At the meeting, they discussed the best course of action to get an investigation started on Lenehan, and took notes to pass on to those who couldn't make it.

NEXT STEPS

- The Crown has 30 days to decide whether will appeal Lenehan's verdict.
- The complaint (or complaints) against Judge Lenehan will be reviewed by the Chief Judge's appointee, who may do the following: dismiss the complaint; resolve the complaint; or refer the complaint to the N.S. Judicial Council.

IN BRIEF

Clean-up underway after bio diesel spills at fish farm

Coast guard officials say crews are working to clean up a fuel spill at a fish farm off Vancouver Island's north coast. The federal fisheries department says the coast guard received a report Sunday about a spill from a fuel tank at an Atlantic salmon aquaculture site in Echo Bay. An estimated 900 to 1,000 litres of bio diesel overflowed into the water when a fuel pump was left on overnight. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IMMIGRATION

Feds discuss border-crossers

Federal cabinet ministers are set for an in-depth discussion this week of the practical and political pressures being placed on the Liberal government by a rising number of asylum seekers in Canada.

Border security, RCMP and immigration officials have been running scenarios to prepare for the possibility that a trickle of illegal immigration into Canada could turn into higher numbers in the spring.

The results will help form options being put before cabinet Tuesday, The Canadian Press has learned. Officials are also studying links between groups of border-crossers that might belie the common notion they're all being pushed into Canada by the political climate in the U.S.

Two government officials confirmed that many of the people coming into Quebec hold American visas issued at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Interviews revealed the visas were obtained to use the U.S. as a transit point get to Canada and claim asylum — plans set in motion long before the U.S. election in November, the officials said.

But it is the pictures of RCMP officers hoisting small children above snow-covered fields along the Canada-U.S. frontier that have drawn global attention and placed political pressure on the Trudeau government from all sides. The Conservatives are demanding a crackdown, and want those crossing illegally charged with crimes, something the government notes cannot happen until asylum claims are heard. T

The fact that those claims are being fed into a clogged system has others urging the Liberals to put more resources into the refugee-determination process and the agencies that support newcomers. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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SECURITY

Denial and discord follow wiretap claim

President Donald Trump turned to Congress on Sunday for help finding evidence to support his unsubstantiated claim that former President Barack Obama had Trump's telephones tapped during the election. Obama's intelligence chief said no such action was ever carried out, and a U.S. official said the FBI has asked the Justice Department to dispute the allegation.

Republican leaders of Congress appeared willing to honour the president's request, but the move has potential risks for the president, particularly if the House and Senate intelligence committees unearth damaging information about Trump, his aides or his associates.

Trump claimed in a series of tweets without evidence Saturday that his predecessor had tried to undermine him by tapping the telephones at Trump Tower, the New York skyscraper where Trump based his campaign and transition operations, and maintains a home.

Obama's director of national intelligence, James Clapper, said nothing matching Trump's claims had taken place.

"Absolutely, I can deny it," said Clapper, who left government when Trump took office in January. Other representatives for the former president also denied Trump's allegation.

The FBI has asked the Justice Department to dispute Trump's allegations, a U.S. official told The Associated Press on Sunday. The official wasn't authorized to discuss the request by name and spoke on condition of anonymity. No such statement has been issued by the Justice Department. DOJ spokeswoman Sarah Isgur Flores declined to comment Sunday.

The New York Times reported that senior American officials say FBI Director James Comey has argued that the claim must be corrected by the Justice Department because it falsely insinuates that the FBI broke the law.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer said without elaborating Sunday that Trump's instruction to Congress was based on "very troubling" reports "concerning potentially politically motivated investigations immediately ahead of the 2016 election." Spicer did not respond to inquiries about the reports he cited in announcing the request.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TENSION

Seoul: North Korea fires ballistic missiles in ocean

North Korea on Monday fired "several" banned ballistic missiles that flew about 1,000 kilometres into waters off its east coast, South Korea's military said, an apparent reaction to huge military drills by Washington and Seoul that Pyongyang insists are an invasion rehearsal.

It was not clear what type of missile was fired or the exact number; Pyongyang has staged a series of missile test-launches of various ranges in recent months. The ramped-up tests come as leader Kim Jong Un pushes for a nuclear and missile program that can deter what he calls U.S. and South Korean hostility toward the North.

Seoul and Washington call their military drills on the Korean Peninsula, which remains in a technical state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice and not a peace treaty, defensive and routine.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

POLITICS GERMANY ALMOST TURNED BACK REFUGEES IN 2015: REPORT

In this Sept. 16, 2015 photo, a young boy looks at police officers after he and other refugees were pulled out of a train by police at a train station in southern Germany. German newspaper 'Welt am Sonntag' reports that the government planned to close the border with Austria and turn back asylum-seekers in September 2015, but nixed the plan at the last minute. The paper reported Sunday. The interior ministry said in a statement it could "neither confirm nor deny" the report.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A 'confusing story' from Trump on LGBTQ rights

EQUALITY

Advocates worried Trump isn't the one making policies

Before same-sex marriage was legal anywhere in America, a gay activist in Florida twice brought a date to the Mar-a-Lago club. Each time, Rand Hoch and his guest were greeted by the smiling face of Donald Trump.

"Great eye contact. Firm handshake. The same way with everybody who came in," Hoch, founder and president of the Palm Beach County Human Rights Council, recalled. "There was no difference at all with my dates and me and the people in back of me or in front of me. He's out there, he's personable, and there's no way he's going to treat anybody differently."

Never before has the leader of the Republican Party shown as much public comfort with gay people as this one has. Trump has attended gay weddings, donated to gay causes, and welcomed gay couples as Mar-a-Lago members when they were still shunned by other Florida clubs.

Now he is president, and much of the LGBTQ community is apprehensive.

"I don't think he is making policy. I think he's surrounded himself with some horrible people when it comes to LGBTQ issues, they're the ones that are making policy, and he's going to sign whatever Steve Bannon puts in front of him," said Hoch. "It's not like there's anybody in the official administration who's an advocate of treating LGBTQ people the way we treat every other American."

Trump's vice-president, Christian conservative Mike Pence, approved an Indiana law that permitted businesses to cite "religious freedom" to defend against claims of anti-gay discrimination. Bannon, his chief strategist, ran a website that published anti-gay articles. Most notably, Attorney General Jeff Sessions has a long record of fierce opposition to LGBTQ rights.

The six-week-old administration has sent mixed signals so far, alternately heartening and disquieting LGBTQ advocates.

In one of his earliest statements, Trump said he would preserve an Obama order that banned anti-LGBTQ discrimination by federal contractors – his team explaining "he continues to be respectful and supportive of LGBTQ rights, just as he was throughout the election."

Three weeks later, though, his administration withdrew an Obama directive telling schools to allow transgender students to use bathrooms matching their gender identity. In a Friday letter, the Log Cabin Republicans, a gay group that has been supportive of Trump, expressed "deep concerns" about that decision.

In February, Trump spokesman Sean Spicer said Trump was considering a "religious freedom" order that would likely provide protections to businesses and other organizations that want to deny services to same-sex couples and transgender people. Trump then declined to sign an order that was leaked to the media.

Some of Trump's words have encouraged LGBTQ advocates. Some of them have raised alarm. "In terms of actions he's taken and not taken, it's an entirely confusing story," Hoch said.

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Optimism returns to mining sector

INDUSTRY

Investors back after gold, metals prices rebound

With commodity prices on the rise, attendees at the world's largest annual gathering for the mining industry are expected to be cheerier than they were last year.

The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada convention, which kicked off in Toronto Sunday, provides a good sense of the level of optimism in the industry, and organizers say they're gearing up for a solid year.

Last year, booth space at the trade show and the investors exchange was nearly sold out. This year there is a waiting list.

"I would say the sentiment is cautiously optimistic," said Andrew Cheatle, PDAC's executive director.

Commodity prices have begun to move higher after a protracted downturn that, for several years, had put a stop to the raucous industry parties where booze flowed freely.

Slowing economic growth in China led to concerns about a glut of coal, iron ore and other commodities, mining stocks plummeted and interest in junior mining and exploration companies had just about dried up. Faced with a grim outlook, mining companies reeled in their spending.

But since then, prices for gold and other metals have rebounded and investors have started returning to the sector.

> **It's astounding how quickly the tables have turned.**
> David Harquail

"It's astounding how quickly the tables have turned," said David Harquail, CEO of Franco-Nevada Corp.

"Share prices are up, the big companies are talking about dividends and the smaller companies are raising money for new projects again. It's a different world all together."

Harquail recently returned from the Bank of Montreal's Global Metals & Mining Conference in Hollywood, Fla., a precursor to the PDAC convention.

"Everyone was partying as if gold was at $1,900 again," said Harquail.

Although capital is beginning to return to the sector, industry executives say we're still far from the highs of the last commodity boom several years ago.

"We haven't come back to the really buoyant, exuberant days," says Rob McEwen, chief owner of McEwen Mining.

While many companies have a little more cash on hand, they may be hesitant to spend it because they're not completely convinced commodity prices are heading higher, says McEwen.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

150 WAYS of looking at Canada

POSTCARD NO. 30

SABLE ISLAND NATIONAL PARK, N.S.

ON DEC. 1 2013 THE CRESCENT MOON-SHAPED ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF NOVA SCOTIA BECAME A NATIONAL PARK RESERVE. THE ISLAND IS FAMOUS FOR ITS HORSES, BIRDS, SAND DUNES AND LEGENDS. IT IS THE PERFECT PLACE FOR A LIFE-LONG HORSE LOVER TO OBSERVE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SCENERY. HORSES ROAM THE DUNE BEACHES WITH THEIR WIND SWEPT MAINS FLYING IN THE SUN. I CAPTURED THE MOMENT IN MY MIND AND WITH MY CAMERA FOR OTHERS TO EXPERIENCE. **TRUDY FERGUSON**

SEND US YOUR POSTCARD

Each day until July 1, Metro will feature one reader's postcard in our editions across the country, on Metronews.ca and our 150postcards Instagram page. Get involved by sending us a photo of your favourite place in Canada along with 25 to 50 words about why that place is special to you. Email us at **scene@metronews.ca** or post to Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag **#150postcards**.

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Monday, March 6, 2017

URBAN ETIQUETTE ELLEN VANSTONE

THE QUESTION

How do you respond to baseless statements about newcomers causing spikes in violent crime?

Dear Ellen,

In old Toronto, American visitors would comment on the good manners of the city's burghers and their clean streets. Then Pierre Trudeau introduced an open-door immigrant policy that encouraged tens of thousands of uneducated, poverty-stricken, and culturally alien newcomers to our major cities. His policy was meant to lessen Canada's traditional bond to the U.K., and create a large voting base that would be indebted to the Liberal party. Toronto is now home to hundreds of thousands of Third World immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and illegals who have formed ghettos in an effort to keep their culture alive and not integrate. Unfortunately, this often includes the worst elements of their previous cultures, hence the unprecedented increase in violent crime. So don't expect Canadian manners and morals from this group. The most we can expect is that our police can get on top of the crime wave and make our streets safer.

Derek Holloway, Etobicoke

Dear Derek,

According to Bob Plamondon's 2013 book, The Truth About Trudeau, the number of immigrants admitted annually declined from 183,974 in 1968 when PET took office to 90,000 by 1984, when he left for good. During the Progressive Conservatives' Mulroney years, it escalated to 250,000 by 1993. Today, over half the population of Toronto was born outside Canada, according to the city website. As for crime, news about shootings is alarming, but the sensational headlines disguise the fact that in Toronto homicides are down, from 86 in 2007 to 69 in 2016 according to the Toronto Police Service.

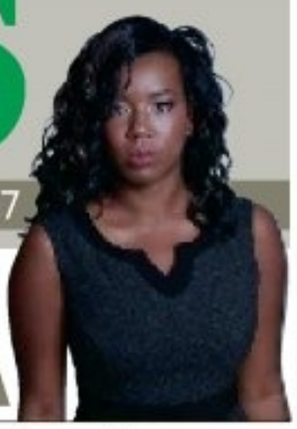
The facts of the case aren't the point here. It's how you have perceived them.

But the facts of the case aren't the point here. It's how you have perceived them. I can't argue with how you feel, but since you wrote to me, I'll share where I'm coming from. My world view is shaped by being raised as a Christian. I'm no longer religious, but I still consider Jesus Christ's golden rule as the best rule to live by: Treat others as you would have them treat you.

Where you see "Third World immigrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and illegals" forming "ghettos in an effort to keep their culture alive and not integrate," I see normal folks sticking together out of a basic human need for companionship and safety. I don't believe anyone flees war, persecution, oppression or poverty because they want to live separate from and resented by people who've forgotten their own immigrant roots. I'm so proud of Toronto and Canada for the support we give to newcomers so they can rise up from their disadvantaged beginnings here, and contribute to a richer society for all of us. Our multicultural city, in my view, is the true meaning of Christianity — in Technicolor.

I know how hard it is to accept people who are different. It can be frightening to see "normal" life in Canada disrupted by people who don't think or act like you, and who don't want to. And some of "them," just like some of "us," will inevitably represent the "worst elements of their previous cultures." But their presence here is also a wonderful opportunity for us to put our own standards of human decency to the test — and hope we measure up.

Need advice?
Email Ellen:
scene@metronews.ca



VICKY MOCHAMA

In Get Out, it's the little things that are frighteningly real

At a friend's wedding shower, a friend of the bride's mother greeted me with enthusiastic warmth.

"Hey! I haven't seen you in a while. How are things?"

We'd never met.

She had confused me for a new neighbour of hers. What did the new neighbour and I have in common? We are both black women.

I wasn't sure what to do except to laugh it off.

In Get Out, the recent Jordan Peele horror film, I saw the same instinct to laugh off racial incidents from Chris, the film's main character. Instead of a dramedy like Guess Who's Coming To Dinner, Get Out turns the idea of a black man meeting his white partner's parents into a thriller about the real and perceived danger of being the only black person in a predominantly white space.

There's a scene that surely reads differently depending on who you are.

Chris, a black photographer goes with his girlfriend, Rose, to meet her parents on their pastoral property in upstate New York. Her father takes Chris on a tour of the house.

For the untrained ear, it sounds like any house tour: A souvenir from Bali. A photo of his dad, who raced Jesse Owens. The maid. For me, the entire conversation sounded like, "Hey Chris, you're black. This is a new room, and by the way, you're black."

By pointing out his worldliness and adjacency to black people and black history, the father is signalling his bona fides on race while at the same time reminding Chris that, as a black man, he is different. (Later, he will insist that he would have voted for Obama a third time if he could.)

The way the conversation subtly pivots to race is just one of the ways in which people who wouldn't consider themselves to be racist can come off as racist.

They may be well-intentioned, but it often feels like an effort to address race by subterfuge. Rather than actually say aloud "I noticed you're black," a lot of people will say a more general phrase like "My cousin's kid is doing a semester in Africa."

The movie has more overt moments of reminding Chris he's black.

I won't spoil it the house party scenes except to say that it's very hard to enjoy a glass of wine while older white folks talk about whether you're more of a caramel or a chocolate skin tone. Gulps, not sips, are required.

These seemingly innocuous incidents pile up yet they're hardly worth delivering a seminar on race to the offenders. Because of the semblance of innocence, it is hard to point to them as evidence.

That's the rub of racism in progressive places, especially dominantly white spaces. It is hard to put together the comments, questions and asides for other people in a way that spells out the racism.

The easier option is to get out.

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Critics say blue mania at Paris Fashion Week is a statement about 'the blues' over the rise of nationalism

Firecracking the gender code

Comedian Naomi Snieckus's new podcast Firecracker Department will feature guests who can speak about the behind-the-scenes of the entertainment industry. Among those scheduled so far are: Jayne Eastwood, Annie Murphy, Bette Macdonald, and Debra McGrath. CONTRIBUTED

PODCAST

Naomi Snieckus interviews bright, loud, bold women

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

Naomi Snieckus has accomplished much in Canadian showbiz. She has accrued Canadian Comedy Awards for improvisation and appeared in dozens of homegrown television shows (including her current role on CBC's Mr. D). But now the multi-talented actress has a new mission — propelling the term "firecracker lady" into the zeitgeist.

"A firecracker is someone who is unabashed, somebody who is unapologetic," explained Snieckus recently from Los Angeles. "They're bright and loud and bold and they're all the women that I talk to."

Energized by her colleagues in the male-dominated entertainment industry, Snieckus has created the podcast Firecracker Department with intent to spotlight the most intriguing women in entertainment by sharing a glass of good wine and even better conversation.

"This is new to me, this world of interviewing," admits Snieckus. "We're not sitting at a desk, our shoes are off — it's got a little bit more of a casual feel, (so) you have a glass of wine and a cheese plate and you go, 'Oh, this is going to be a little bit different.'"

It's also not just putting the focus on the most famous female voices in 'the biz' either. Although Snieckus has certainly caught up with top talents like legendary character-actor Jayne Eastwood (Hairspray, TV's SCTV) and Annie Murphy (Schitt's Creek), she also aims to introduce audiences to unfamiliar writers, editors and other behind-the-scenes personalities.

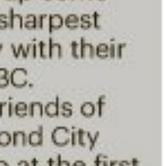
"There's so much more in-depth discussion to have with these women," said Snieckus, who even plans to include her aspiring 9-year-old firecracker niece in a future episode. "I asked her what's her advice to women and she was like, 'Do what you want to do'. That's so great — she's such an inspiring little creature because she hasn't been told she can't do anything yet."

Firecracker Department premiered last week with episodes every Monday on iTunes and YouTube.

While Snieckus promises funny conversations that probe the "victories, embarrassments and vagaries of fame," she also hopes that women are stirred by the podcast as well. Indeed, under a still-new Trump presidency, women's rights feel as if they've stalled momentarily so inspiration may be more important than ever.

"If you've got something good to say, say it loudly," said Snieckus. "In general, intelligent people can't speak loud enough. Some people can't speak quiet enough, but in this case, I think more venues for women's voices is always essential."

DREAM GUESTS



Catherine O'Hara
The improv legend stars on TV's Schitt's Creek.
"If you look at (her) performances, she doesn't just rest at being a comedian," said Snieckus. "She finds depth in everything she does."

Carol Burnett
The comedy icon has been called "a bona-fide feminist hero".
"Folks (like her) have been around long enough to see what used to be and ridden the success of what it is now," said Snieckus.

Baroness Von Sketch
Canada's newest class clowns, the female quartet served up some of the nation's sharpest sketch comedy with their TV debut on CBC.
"Those are all friends of mine from Second City and they're also at the first stages of their adventure in this," said Snieckus.

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Still satisfied, even after all these formulaic years

THE SHOW: The Bachelor, Season 21, Episode 10 (City/ABC)
THE MOMENT: "I've never had an orgasm"

Raven, a boutique owner in Arkansas, is dining by candlelight with bachelor Nick in Lapland, Finland. He's wearing a wooly turtleneck. Her red sweater keeps falling off her shoulders.

"My dad always told me he prayed I'd have an easy love," Raven says. "Every step of the way you've made it so easy for me to love you." Nick leans in and kisses her.

They agree to use the Fantasy Suite — i.e., have sex. "I need to tell you something," Raven says. "My ex, the only person I've had sex with, never gave me an orgasm." Nick gulps.

Later, host Chris Harrison shills for next week: "Will Raven's date come to a satisfying end? And in The Women Tell All, it's round two of Taylor vs. Corinne."

And there you have the tripartite Bachelor formula. One part True Love: Raven's dad story is sweet. We sigh, hoping maybe this is real.

One part Titillation: In a to-camera interview, Raven makes an excellent point. "It's taboo to discuss" orgasms, she says, "but it's important." Yes it is, sister. But to make sure this show doesn't get too pro-woman, the producers hype up this o-talk before and after each commercial break.

And finally, we get part three of the formula: Catfight!

This show has survived 21 seasons, plus spin-offs, plus a cynical exposé, UnReal. And yet it chugs along, because if it ain't broke…

To paraphrase a toast Homer Simpson once gave about alcohol: "To love. The solution to, and cause of, all life's problems."

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Bachelor Nick gets cosy with love hopeful Raven. CONTRIBUTED

Leaps and bounds to a musical break

WORK & EDUCATION

A Sheridan student relishes working with his dance icon

Melita Kuburas
Metro | Canada

When David Lindo-Reid was a university student in his native home of Kingston, Jamaica, his mom would joke: "Well, he majors in extra-curricular activities."

That's because his main focus at that time wasn't his full-time academic stream, management, but rather his true passion in life — the performing arts.

"All I did was sing, act and dance," laughs Lindo-Reid. The 25-year-old thinks back fondly on both receiving his management degree and The Company Dance Theatre where, in his spare time, he worked with artistic director Tony Wilson. "He really took me under his wing. I was 18 and I just started dancing three hours a day, three to four days a week," says Lindo-Reid, who is now in the ensemble for Sousatzka, a Broadway-bound musical currently playing in Toronto.

Sousatzka tells the story of a South African family who fled apartheid to settle in London, England, in 1982. Producer Garth Drabinsky describes it as "a musical about God-given genius, the sacrificial journey of refugees and the ultimate redemption of the human spirit to begin again." That theme should resonate with many Canadians, and it's one Lindo-Reid wholeheartedly connects with.

He left Jamaica in 2013, marrying his Canadian partner on July 1 in New York City before moving to Canada at the end of that summer.

"I knew that I couldn't foresee a future being an openly gay person in Jamaica," says Lindo-Reid, recalling a traumatic high school experience during which he was cornered and threatened by other students when a rumour had spread about him being gay. He was only 14 at the time.

While he recognizes the LGBTQ community is making progress in that country now — the second pride parade was held in the country last year — there was another reason he wanted to move: his ambition to turn his musical theatre passion into a career. But it wasn't easy.

After getting accepted into the Sheridan College honours bachelor of musical theatre performance program, Lindo-Reid and his husband moved to Oakville, Ont. three days before orientation was to begin.

"We didn't have a lot of money. We literally grabbed the first place that we found once we arrived, which was a crappy basement apartment," he recalls.

Once he was able to work in Canada, he took on three jobs: "I was a server at Kelsey's; I was housekeeping at the residence at school; and I was teaching dance part-time at one of my friend's performance companies."

The gruelling grind eventually paid off. When he found out Sousatzka was choreographed by one of his icons, Graciela Daniele, he knew he couldn't pass up the chance to audition.

Now, he is set to graduate from Sheridan with his class, while working closely with the Tony-nominated cast and crew. He plays several characters in the show, including a South African anti-apartheid activist and a young punk Londoner.

"I don't think there could have been a bigger show that I could have possibly done (while) not even out of school yet," he says.

Although his schedule is still packed — he performs eight shows a week, has three days of rehearsal and goes to class on Mondays — it's worth it as he works towards his long-term goals.

"I would love to go back to Jamaica at some point and really contribute as much as I can to young people who have a talent and want to get into musical theatre or performance."

David Lindo-Reid is a Sheridan College student who is currently performing in the ensemble of Broadway-bound musical Sousatzka in Toronto. COURTESY BRAYDEN SWIRE

MONEY

Balance is true key to financial success

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

One thing that confuses people about money is the number of mixed messages they receive.

On one side are companies that throw credit at you, offering cards with the latest bells and whistles, points to fly, free travel insurance, cash back. They promise you that you can have everything you want right now for just a small minimum monthly payment.

On the other side are experts who shout that debt is evil and that it's stupid to pay interest.

Who would you rather believe? The guy who tells you it's okay to go shopping, or the guy who calls you a moron for spending money you haven't yet earned?

Then there are the mixed messages about saving for retirement: On side A are Jacks who say that if you aren't making the maximum contribution to your RRSP every year, cat food will be too good for you.

On the flip side are the Jackies who claim that you shouldn't even put money in a retirement plan because RRSPs are a tax trap.

Who would you rather believe? The body that tells you to go ahead and spend all your money because saving is a waste or the body that tells you to stop stealing from your future self? Hmm.

If you don't have a balanced approach to your financial life, you're going to be off-kilter. ISTOCK

Then there's the life insurance industry. On one side sit the boys in the T-shirts that say, "Term insurance is the best." The lads on the other side are wearing T-shirts with the slogan, "Permanent insurance is the best." So which is it?

Is it any wonder that people are confused?

While people typically associate me with debt, I don't believe that credit is the monster. Ignorance is. And it doesn't matter if you're buying a house, buying insurance, or buying an investment, if you don't have a balanced approach to your financial life, you're going to be off-kilter.

Doing anything whole hog and to the detriment of the other parts of your financial life is not only shortsighted, it's dumb.

Debt repayment is important, but so is having some money set aside for emergencies and to grow for the future. After all, if you're debt-free with no emergency fund, it'll only take a tiny slip to push you into the red.

The only way to find balance is to be able to hold more than one thought in your head at the same time . . . actually four thoughts, that's all:

1. Don't spend more money than you make. So no credit card or line of credit balances, and no overdraft.

2. Save something. How much depends on how old you are and how much you've already saved.

3. Get your debt paid off — consumer debt first.

4. Mitigate your risks with an emergency fund and enough of the right kind of insurance.

Stop listening to the cacophony of shouts trying to sway you to one side or the other in a debate. Think for yourself. If there are holes in your knowledge, learn. Then think.

It's how you choose to use your money that will keep you balanced financially.

For more money advice, visit Gail's website at gailvazoxlade.com

MOVIES

Disney embraces first 'gay moment'

To be clear: Brokeback Mountain, this isn't.

The so-called "gay moment" in Disney's new live-action version of Beauty and the Beast is subtle. And it may sail over the heads of young viewers.

But the cast and director say it is indeed a gay moment — one they're proud of. And advocates are calling it a big step forward for Disney and for youth entertainment.

Mere word of it was also enough to lead one Alabama drive-in theatre to cancel plans to show the film — apparently without having seen it, because it doesn't open until March 17.

The scene in question involves the character of LeFou (Josh Gad), the timid and lovable sidekick to the preening villain Gaston (Luke Evans). Without spoiling too much, it's safe to say that LeFou spends much of the film in Gaston's thrall, and toward the end also has a moment — a few seconds, really — where the same-sex theme is more overt.

At the film's Los Angeles premiere on Thursday evening, Gad said he was "very proud" of the scene.

"(Director) Bill Condon did an amazing job of giving us an opportunity to create a version of LeFou that isn't like the original ... but that makes him more human and makes him a wonderfully complex character to some extent," he said. "And there's a moment at the end of the film that I don't want to ruin ... because I want the surprise to be intact, but I'm very proud of it. I think it's an incredible moment and it's subtle, but I think it's effective."

Josh Gad as Le Fou, left alongside Luke Evans's Gaston. LAURIE SPARHAM/DISNEY/AP

The length of the scene — or scenes, since LeFou's fluid orientation is hinted at elsewhere — is not what's important, said Sarah Kate Ellis, president of GLAAD, the LGBTQ media advocacy group.

"It's a wonderful step forward," she said. "And this is incredibly important for the youth of today." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

YOU CAN DO THIS ONLINE MERCHANT

How to launch a clothing brand

WHY I LIKE MY JOB

Jeremy Watt, 34, Julie Brown, 33, co-founders online clothing and lifestyle brand Province of Canada, Toronto.

Watt: We originally studied graphic design — Julie went to college in Montreal, and I went to college in Toronto. We had various creative jobs throughout our careers, but we wanted to follow our passion and start our own brand. When Julie was working at Toronto retailer Au Lit Fine Linens as their creative director, we helped get them online. From that project, we decided to open our own business. Because we're both so passionate about fashion, we launched the clothing line Province of Canada. On a day to day, we could be editing photos that go onto the websites, to literally shipping the orders that come in.

Brown: A lot of our website traffic comes from social media, so we spend a lot of time curating our Instagram and social feeds. We also spend a lot of time designing our line for next season, working with the manufacturers who actually make the clothes and emailing customers.

Watt: Every day consists of a little bit of everything. On a more conceptual level, when there's just two of you, it's a mix of dreaming big in an entrepreneurial sense but also getting your hands dirty with these mundane tasks like packing orders.

Brown: I've spoken to a lot of people who run their own business, and some have business degrees and some don't, and a lot of what I hear is that what we're doing right now is our hands-on degree. You learn the most when you're doing it. No one can teach you experience.

Watt: For the TTC rider on a Monday morning thinking "I want to start my own business but have to go back to school," I would say 100 per cent you don't. It's worth the risk. I love the freedom to make my own decisions. It's super fulfilling to flap our own wings and see that what we're creating has value.

Brown: It's also really fulfilling to develop any product we want and to see our designs be successful.

THE BASICS: Online merchant

$30,000

Starting salary for a small business owner, though successful small businesses can pull in upwards of six figures or more.

+8%

The amount of growth expected in this field over the next eight years.

Data for this feature was provided by payscale.com, onetonline.org and Ontariocolleges.ca.

HOW TO START

People looking to launch their own small businesses online don't have to go to school for a business degree.

Many opt to start their own digital storefronts as a side business or a hobby, and learn their skills along the way, while others dive in head-first and learn through trial-by-error.

Those looking to go to school to further their education can pursue two- or four-year business degrees or diplomas, MBAs or even small business post-graduate certificates. Schools across the country offer these programs, and students will often learn a mix of learning of economics, accounting, marketing best practices and other foundational knowledge to starting a business.

WHERE YOU CAN GO

There are a number of platforms that let people sell their products online, such as Etsy or Ottawa's Shopify. The nature of online selling means people can pretty much work from any city in the country. The big requirements, of course, for setting up your own digital store, are a reliable internet connection and access to easy shipping.

FOOD

A boost for B.C.-grown 'choi'

Advocates in Vancouver's Chinese community are helping local Chinese farmers and grocers survive in the face of gentrification in Chinatown, once an important hub for B.C. growers.

Developers are moving into the neighbourhood at a rapid pace and more than half of local-food businesses like green grocers, fish mongers, and butchers have closed up shop in the last six years, according to a study by the Hua Foundation.

Gentrification is bad for local food security, said executive director, Kevin Huang. This is especially the case in Chinatown, where small grocers stock locally grown Chinese veggies, known as 'choi' for most of the year.

"That raises a lot of concerns when real estate and affordability is pushing out small businesses," said Huang. "If only corporations are able to survive in neighbourhoods, we are impacting the whole food supply chain and the food economy that is local."

More than 90 per cent of produce grown in the Lower Mainland in the 1920s was cultivated by Chinese farmers in a system segregated by racist policies of the time, according to Kay Anderson, author of Vancouver's Chinatown. While racist policies are no longer in practice, many small Chinese businesses are still wary of outsiders, said Huang.

"We are trying to figure out how do we bridge business communities together that have been segregated for so long," he said.

The Hua Foundation has found some success so far, partnering with Vancouver Farmers' Market (VFM), to encourage participation in the market from both Chinese farmers and consumers.

The eight markets saw a five to 15 per cent increase in the sale of Asian vegetables in 2016, according to VFM. WANYEE LI/METRO

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Suite 2000, Ottawa

For more information, call:
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Canada's Cyle Larin scored the first-ever goal at Orlando City Stadium in Sunday's 1-0 win over New York City FC

Thompson, Leman win on home snow

SKI CROSS

Canadians make it a sweep in final World Cup race

Marielle Thompson found herself in an unfamiliar position in Sunday's ski cross final — in second spot after winning her previous three heats in wire-to-wire victories.

But the most consistent ski cross racer on the planet simply bided her time as if she was stalking prey, and when she zoomed past Sandra Naeslund of Sweden halfway down the hill, a roar went up from the crowd at Blue Mountain Resort.

Thompson capped her thoroughly dominant World Cup season with a victory, and was presented with her third Crystal Globe as the season's overall champion.

"I think any time I'm behind in a heat I just sit and try to be patient," the 24-year-old from Whistler, B.C., said. "I know there's that big long straightaway at the end and I just needed to wait for my chance and I'm glad it worked out in the end."

The victory was Thompson's seventh on the season, and kicked off an excellent day for Canada.

Canada finished 1-2 in the men's final with Brady Leman winning gold and Chris Del Bosco claiming silver.

Marielle Thompson of Whistler, B.C., left, captured her seventh victory of the World Cup ski cross season on Sunday in The Blue Mountains, Ont. MARK BLINCH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Brady Leman GETTY IMAGES

Canada was presented with the Nation's Cup as the top team on the season.

The solid result was the perfect final tune-up for the freestyle world championships which begin Tuesday in Sierra Nevada, Spain.

Leman, a 30-year-old from Calgary, was quick out of the gate and never trailed in any of Sunday's four rounds of the event that sees four skiers race head-to-head down the icy run of treacherous turns and jumps.

"It's not often that you can win a ski cross like that (skiing from the front), because everyone is so good," Leman said. "It's a cool feeling to be able to get out front and hold everyone off all day and just stick to the plan and execute."

Leman finished second in the overall World Cup standings. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN FINLAND

Harvey wins cross-country gold medal at worlds

Alex Harvey won the men's 50-kilometre freestyle cross-country ski race at the Nordic world championships Sunday.

Harvey, of St. Ferreol, Que., timed his final attack perfectly, taking the lead on the last corner and holding off Russian Sergei Ustyugov in the final sprint.

Weekend recap

Above: Viktor Stalberg scored his first goal as a Senator since being traded to Ottawa last week and Erik Karlsson also tallied in Saturday's 3-2 win over Columbus at Canadian Tire Centre. Alex Burrows, who scored two goals in his CTC debut on Thursday against Colorado, was held pointless against the Blue Jackets. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Right: Canada's Meaghan Benfeito and Vincent Riendeau closed out the season-opening diving World Series with a bronze medal in mixed synchro 10-metre platform on Sunday in Beijing. LINTAO ZHANG/GETTY IMAGES

Below: Tyron Woodley retained his 170-pound title with a lacklustre majority decision over Stephen Thompson in a defensive-minded main event at UFC 209 on Saturday night in Las Vegas. JOHN LOCHER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Russian lawmaker pitches hooliganism as a sport

A Russian lawmaker has proposed an unorthodox solution to the country's problems with soccer hooliganism ahead of next year's World Cup — legalize it and make it a spectator sport.

Igor Lebedev, who sits in the Russian parliament, has drawn up rules for organized brawls — 20 fighters on each side, unarmed — that "could turn fans' aggression in a peaceful direction." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Johnson plays up to ranking

Dustin Johnson survived a few anxious moments on the back nine by playing mistake-free when it mattered to win the Mexico Championship in his debut as the No. 1 player in the world.

Johnson blasted out of a fairway bunker to the middle of the 18th green to secure a two-putt par for a 3-under 68 and a one-shot victory over Tommy Fleetwood of England.

Johnson became the fifth player to win in his debut at No. 1. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLARKSON CUP

Poulin leads Canadiennes to 4th title

Marie-Philip Poulin scored twice, including into an empty net, as the Montreal Canadiennes claimed their fourth Clarkson Cup title with a 3-1 win over the Calgary Inferno on Sunday.

The win exacted some revenge for the Canadiennes after the Inferno earned an 8-3 win in last year's Clarkson Cup, the Canadian Women's Hockey League championship. Last year was Calgary's first Clarkson Cup appearance.

Katie Clement-Heydra also scored for Montreal and Julie Chu had two assists on Sunday.

SUNDAY In Ottawa

3	1
MONTREAL	CALGARY

The title was the fourth for Montreal in the nine years the Clarkson Cup has been held and the team's first championship since 2012. They also won titles in 2009 and 2011, all as the Montreal Stars. In 2013 and 2015 they were also the Stars and lost the championship both of those years.

Montreal's CWHL team was renamed the Canadiennes before last season.

The Inferno were the regular-season champions going 20-4-0 and finishing four points up on the Canadiennes in the standings. The teams split six games during the regular season with one of Calgary's wins coming in overtime.

Calgary scored a league-best 100 goals during the regular season but couldn't get one past Charline Labonte on Sunday until Jillian Saulnier broke the shutout bid at 12:57 of the third period.

Labonte finished with 27 saves while Emerance Maschmeyer made 21 in Calgary's net.

Clement-Heydra opened the scoring with a power-play goal at 12:36 of the first period, grabbing a puck out of the air and dropping it to her feet before chipping a backhand over the shoulder of Maschmeyer.

At 5:24 of the second period Poulin doubled the advantage on a shot from the slot. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Comforting Slow Cooker Chicken Stew

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

We're sad to say, it's not spring yet so you're still going to need some warming, rib-sticking dinners like this easy-peasy chicken dinner.

Ready in 6 hours 10 minutes
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 6 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 6 chicken thighs
- 1 potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme (1 tsp dried)
- 1 or 2 bay leaves
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 cup fresh or frozen peas
- 1/2 cup light cream

Directions

1. In a Dutch oven or high-sided skillet, sauté onions, celery and carrots in splash of vegetable oil for about five minutes.

2. Add flour, thyme and bay leaves and stir for a minute. Add stock and stir until smooth. Simmer for 3 or 4 minutes until sauce thickens.

3. Add the potatoes and a good pinch of salt and pepper.

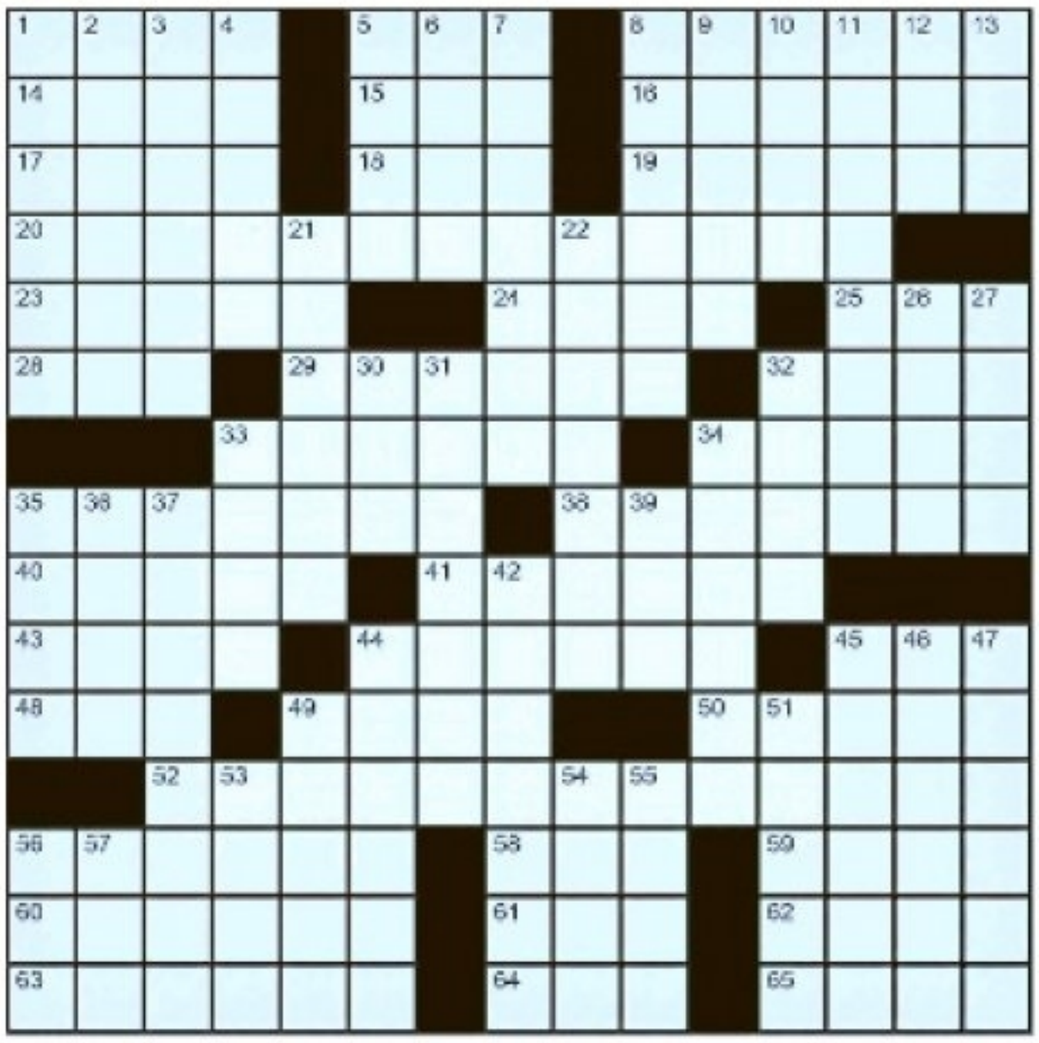
4. Place chicken thighs in the bottom of slow cooker and spoon the vegetable mixture over. Seal and set for 6 hours.

5. Add peas and cream and cook for 10 more minutes. Serve plain or over mashed potatoes.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Telecommunications speed unit
5. Unpaired
8. Canadian pilot Billy Bishop (b.1894 - d.1956), for one: 2 wds.
14. 'Height'-meaning prefix
15. Masses, with Polloi
16. Like a widely recognized symbol
17. Lettered frozen dessert chain
18. Possibilities
19. Yellow-bordered mag since 1888: 2 wds.
20. 1847: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic 'Evangeline' poem: 4 wds.
23. Building extension
24. Delivery vehicles
25. Dustup
28. San Francisco's _ Valley
29. Futuristic cards
32. Climbing plant's one-of-some
33. Fame
34. Vivian of "I Love Lucy"
35. Word's opposite meaning word
38. Got even
40. Bible king
41. Have ambitions
43. The Phantom's name in Gaston Leroux's classic novel The Phantom of the Opera
44. Socially belongs: 2 wds.
45. Wine classification, Grand _
48. Broom alternative
49. Adjust the dial
50. Greyish
52. Ontario's provincial flower: 2 wds.
56. Pauley Perrette's character on "NCIS", Abby _
58. Triste
59. Sky bear
60. Harvey of "The Carol Burnett Show"
61. Lacto-_ (Vegetarian type)
62. Accelerated in the auto
63. Leafy salad ingredients
64. '_' _ for Newfoundland
65. London, England's _ Park

DOWN
1. WWII battleground Peninsula in the Philippines
2. Identifying info on a bank statement, for short: 2 wds.
3. Refined
4. Writer, Sir Arthur Conan _ (b.1859 - d.1930)
5. Columbus, _
6. Politely tip one's hat
7. Deny
8. Gospel singer CeCe
9. Training institutes, for short
10. _ de boeuf
11. Making mad
12. Business: Co., in French
13. Umberto _ (Foucault's Pendulum author)
21. Stretch
22. Short snoozes
26. As soon as
27. Unwanted plant
30. "Pick a card, _ card."
31. Caesar Salad ingredient
32. Barn pointer
33. Chess piece
34. _ equinox
35. "Cough..."
36. Pianist/conductor, Peter _
37. Hidden trap activator: 2 wds.
39. Gladiator's lucky number
42. Rancher's hat
44. Sofas-turned-beds
45. What the happily-making-noise bird is
46. Practiced eco-friendliness
47. Bed, upon rising
49. Tennessee football player
51. Partially frozen colourful drink
53. Canadian actor Mr. Cronyn
54. Sitarist, _ Shankar
55. Wedding vows: 2 wds.
56. Film studio, DreamWorks _ _ _
57. _ anglais (English horn)

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
This is a great day to research anything or dig for answers. You will not stop until you find what you're looking for..

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Enjoy all your relationships with friends and members of groups today, because people are upbeat and glad to see you. Share your hopes and dreams for the future with someone to get his or her feedback.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
You are high-viz now, with the Sun high in your chart. This also means you look good to bosses and VIPs, which is why you should make your pitch. Ask for what you want.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Make travel plans or do anything that will expand your life experience today, because you want to learn more and feel adventurous. What can you do?

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Discussions about shared property, taxes, debt and insurance issues will go well. This includes anything to do with inheritances and the wealth of your partner.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
This is a strong day for a heart-to-heart discussion with a partner or close friend. People are ready to meet you halfway, and vice versa.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Think of ways that you can get better organized both at home and at work. Not only will you be happy to be better organized, you also will want to do something to improve your health.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
This is a playful, fun-loving creative day for you. Enjoy sports events, activities with children, the arts and all social diversions.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
A conversation with a parent could be significant today. In either case, you will focus on home, family and your private life.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Listen to yourself today. Make a point of being clear in all your communications with others. People want to hear what you have to say.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You are giving thought to cash flow, earnings and your assets today. That's because you're giving yourself a report card that is based on earnings and wealth.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
All your dealings with others today will be quite successful, because you are coming from a strong space. Your confidence is obvious, which is why others will listen to you.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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FRIDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

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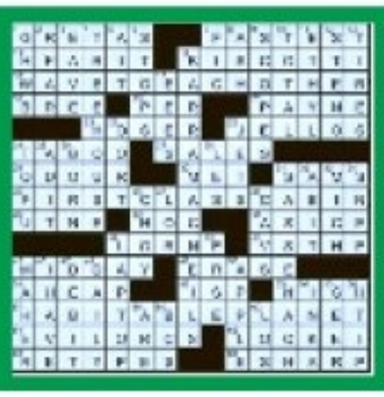

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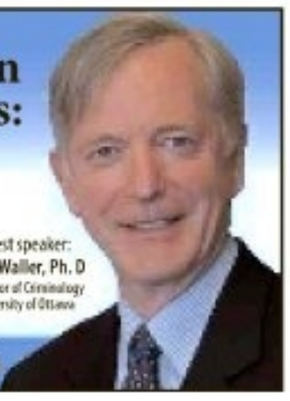

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